

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 03234 121746Z

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, JM

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS: POSSIBLE MATALON VISIT TO WASHINGTON

1. THE SUBJECT OF A POSSIBLE MEETING BETWEEN MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND JUSTICE ELI MATALON AND DEA ADMINISTRATOR BARTELS CAME UP ALMOST CASUALLY IN CONVERSATION SOMETIME BACK. MATALON SEEMED TO REGARD THE CONTACT MORE AS A COURTESY TO BARTELS AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO THANK HIM FOR THE COOPERATION OF HIS AGENCY THAN AS A MEETING TO PLAN FUTURE PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES. MATALON CONTEMPLATED MEETING BARTELS IN MIAMI WHERE BOTH GO FAIRLY FREQUENTLY AND IT WOULD SIMPLY BE A QUESTION OF COORDINATING VISITS.

2. THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF THE VISIT SEEMS TO HAVE BECOME ESCALATED WITH THE CHANGE IN VENUE FROM MIAMI TO WASHINGTON, A CHANGE DEPENDING MORE ON BARTEL'S SCHEDULE THAN ON MATALON'S. WE HAVE NO FIRM INDICATION THAT MATALON INTENDS MORE THAN A COURTESY VISIT, THOUGH HE HAS REPORTEDLY SAID THAT HE HOPED TO DISCUSS FUTURE PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT HE WOULD MAKE A SPECIAL TRIP TO WASHINGTON AT THIS TIME TO MEET BARTELS OR TALK PROGRAMS. HOWEVER, HE HAS INDICATED TO DEA

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PAGE 02 KINGST 03234 121746Z

(S/A SALMI) THAT HE PLANS TO BE IN THE AREA LATER THIS

MONTH ON OTHER BUSINESS -- WHETHER OFFICIAL OR PERSONAL IS NOT CLEAR -- AND A MEETING WITH BARTELS AT THAT TIME MIGHT BE FEASIBLE.

3. COMMENT. WHAT BEGAN AS A CASUAL COURTESY ON MATALON'S PART APPEARS TO HAVE GOTTEN BLOWN OUT OF ALL PROPORTION. WE DO NOT BELIEVE A VISIT BY MATALON TO WASHINGTON PRIMARILY TO MEET WITH USG OFFICIALS AND DISCUSS FUTURE NARCOTICS PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES WOULD SERVE ANY USEFUL PURPOSE AT THIS TIME WHEN BUCCANEER IS JUST GETTING OFF THE GROUND AND HAS YET TO PROVE ITS WORTH. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF HE IS IN THE AREA IN ANY EVENT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO ACQUAINT HIM WITH THE VARIOUS ACTORS IN THE DRAMA ON THE USG SIDE AND BRIEF HIM ON SOME OF OUR FUNDING AND COMMAND-AND-CONTROL MECHANISMS AND PROBLEMS. HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THESE COMPLEXITIES NOW AND TENDS TO REGARD HIMSELF AS DEALING WITH DEA AND THIS MISSION EXCLUSIVELY. SHOULD MATALON TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON WITH THE INTENTION OF TALKING NARCOTICS IN DEPTH, AMBASSADOR WOULD PROBABLY EITHER ACCOMPANY HIM OR JOIN HIM THERE FOR THESE TALKS.

4. WHILE WE DO NOT BELIEVE A VISIT BY MATALON TO WASHINGTON AT THIS TIME WOULD SERVE ANY VERY USEFUL PURPOSE, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE A VISIT TO JAMAICA BY AMBASSADOR VANCE, MR. BARTELS, AND OTHER USG PRINCIPALS ONCE BUCCANEER IS WELL UNDERWAY WOULD BE USEFUL. SUCH A VISIT PRECEEDING OR FOLLOWING MEXICO CITY NARCOTICS CONFERENCE MIGHT MAKE SENSE.
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